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ABSTRACT

The practicum is the creation of a course orientation module for a new introductory English design. The module explains the course topics, the requirements, and the learning settings. Requirements call for specific skill levels in reading, writing, and discussion. Students will be learning in conference, in the community, in small groups, and in independent situations. The main feature of the design is that students have almost complete flexibility as to when they attend school. In addition to creating the module, the practicum studies administration, faculty, and student attitudes toward several course features. The features are independent study, continuous progress, active learning, educational technology, and learning in conference. Some of the important findings are that most of our students do not believe large-group instruction is effective. Our students are basically at ease with modern educational technology; they want to learn with directed independent study, and they find conference learning attractive. On the other hand, our students are somewhat unknowledgeable about the concept of continuous progress. (Author)

ED 091014

COMPARATIVE RESPONSES FROM STUDENTS, FACULTY, AND ADMINISTRATION TO THE PACKAGING OF THE ENTRY COLLEGE COURSE. ENGLISH 131

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CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

JC 740 143

by

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A PRACTICUM PRESENTED TO NOVA UNIVERSITY
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

NOVA UNIVERSITY

May 1, 1974

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction page 1
A. Background
B. Significance

II. The Practicum page 2
A. Study Guide for Orientation to English 131
B. Procedures

III. Results
A. General Attitude Toward Course page 4
B. Independent Study 5
C. Continuous Progress 7
D. Active Learning 9
E. Learning Systems and Technology 11
F. Conference Learning 13

IV. Recommendations 15

Appendix A -- "A Study Guide For Orientation to English 131" page 16

Appendix B -- "Survey of Attitudes" page 31

Appendix C -- Abstract page 32

I. Introduction

For six years English 131 at College of the Mainland has met in large group media sessions and small group discussion sessions. Such a course design has created several problems:

A. Students have not been willing to speak in the large group.

B. All instructors do not feel comfortable in the auditorium (280 students).

C. When students miss, it is very difficult to catch up.

D. Our community has very many shift workers who change from day to night in the middle of the semester.

This investigation has attempted to find out how the community would respond to a restructuring of the course.

II. The Practicum

A. The purpose of this practicum is to create an orientation module for English 131, the title of the module is "A Study Guide For Orientation to English 131," located in Appendix A of this practicum report. The study guide is the very first material a student would receive after enrolling in the course. Its contents include:

1. A pre-test,
2. Objectives,
3. Class and instructor location,
4. Titles of all course learning packages,
5. Evaluation criteria, and
6. A schematic of the course' design.

Accompanying the guide is a listening assignment (cassette) which reinforces all of the above.

The primary feature of the course design is flexibility in that a student has control over the times he wishes to attend school. The only "in school" structure is a three week reading and discussion session, and, even here, the student has some choice.

In addition to the creating of a new course design and the study guide orientation, the practicum tries to discover the attitudes of students, instructors, and administrators--attitudes toward several key characteristics used in the design. Namely, how does each group feel about:

1. The course in general;
2. The use of independent study;
3. Continuous progress;

4. Active learning;
5. Learning systems and technology; and
6. Conference learning?

Questions probing these six key areas are listed on the "Survey of Attitudes" in Appendix B.

B. Hypotheses

The hypotheses deal with the possible attractiveness of the course in general. They are:

1. Eighty percent of the administration will react favorably to the course.
2. Sixty percent of the students will react favorably to the course.
3. Forty percent of the faculty will react favorably to the course.

The study guide, cassette and "Survey of Attitudes" was given to ninety-nine students, ten faculty, and ten administrators. All students reponded (in class), but only half of the faculty and administration responded. Responses from the last two groups are, therefore, indicators only, and carry much less validity than the student responses. The students involved are classified as:

English 131 (Beginning Freshmen)

Day	Night		
34	6	=	40

English 232 (Last Semester Sophomores)

Day	Night		
44	15	=	59

III. Results

A. Attractiveness of course

Statement "a" called for the general opinion about the course.

a. This is a bad course design.

Responses to the statement are classified below:

1 = Strongly Agree 5 = Strongly disagree

Administration

	1	2	3	4	5
a		1		2	2

Faculty

	1	2	3	4	5
a					5

	Day Freshmen					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
a	4	8	1	8	13				2	4

	Day Sophomore					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
a	4	10	3	17	13		5		3	3

Responses to the statement confirm the hypotheses with the exception of the faculty. There is evidently a stronger feeling in favor of the course design than was expected from the faculty. Two thirds (72) of the students are in favor of the design; whereas, only eight students have a strong unfavorable attitude.

B. Independent Study

The following statements probed the respondent's attitude toward learning independently.

f. Most students can learn independently if they are clearly directed.

n. Most students must have the direction of teacher in order to learn and earn course credit.

p. Most high school students could not learn to go to school in this way.

Responses to the statements are classified below:

1 = Strongly Agree 5 = Strongly Disagree

Administration

	1	2	3	4	5
f	2	3			
n	3	2			
p		3		2	

Faculty

	1	2	3	4	5
f	3	1		1	
n	3	1		1	
p				4	1

	Day Freshmen					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
f	19	13		1	1	4	1			1
n	4	8	6	8	6	1		1	3	1
p	1	9	8	12	4	1		1	2	2

	Day Sophomore					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
f	19	14	3	6	2	8	2	1	4	
n	7	15	7	12	3	3	6	1	2	1
p	3	9	6	15	8	6	2	2	2	1

The value for learning independently is one of the highest among the students. 91 percent of the freshmen believe students can independently learn if they are clearly directed. Administrator and instructor values are almost the same. Administrators and instructors have strong feelings about the necessity of teacher direction, 100 percent and 80 percent; whereas, students do not feel such a strong need for teacher direction. 44 percent of the freshmen and 34 percent of the sophomores can tolerate less teacher direction. Instructors definitely think high school students can learn through independent study. Administrators are more conservative. Students tend to agree with instructors on the high school student. Night sophomores, however, are more conservative; 62 percent doubt high school students can cope with independent study.

B. Continuous Progress

The statements measuring attitude were:

c. The semester is an administrative concept and has very little to do with learning.

h. Students should be able to earn credit when they have learned what the course proposes to teach. (8 weeks, 10, 18, 22 weeks, etc.)

j. Courses should last 18 weeks.

o. Students should be allowed to register and begin learning almost everyday of the year.

1 = Strongly Agree 5 = Strongly Disagree

Administration

	1	2	3	4	5
c	1	3		1	1
h	4	1			
j		2		1	2
o	3	2			

Faculty

	1	2	3	4	5
c	4	1			
h	5				
j		1	1	1	2
o	3	2			

	Day Freshman					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
c	9	8	5	4	6		2		3	1
h	23	9	2		1	4	2		2	1
j	4	1	6	12	10				1	5
o	14	11	2	5	2	2	3			1

	Day Sophomore					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
c	11	9	10	7	8	6	1	3	1	2
h	24	18	2	1	1	11	2			
j	4	6	8	15	11	1		2	3	7
o	9	14	7	6	8	6	5			2

All groups have a strong value for the continuous progress concept, students especially. Over 90 percent of the students would like to be able to earn credit when they have met course objectives. All instructors perceive the semester as an administrative phenomenon, but two administrators relate the concept of semester and learning. The large number of "no opinions" among students suggests that "continuous progress is new to them.

D. Active Learning

These statements measured attitudes concerning active (or passive) learning environments.

b. Large group (auditorium) sessions are very effective.

k. Students learn better if they are actively participating, rather than hearing about it.

i. Teachers often represent obstacles to learning because they are the center of attention.

1 = Strongly Agree 5 = Strongly Disagree

Administration

	1	2	3	4	5
b	1	2	2		
k	4	1			
i	3	1			

Faculty

	1	2	3	4	5
b		2	1	2	
k	5				
i		4		1	

Day			Freshman			Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
b		7	5	13	14	1		2	2	1
k	10	13	4	4	3				1	5
i	4	6	14	5	5	1	1	1	3	

Day			Sophomore			Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
b	5	14	2	11	12	1	2		6	4
k	28	9	1	6	1	8	4		1	
i	3	9	9	12	10	2	3		6	2

Administrators believe in the effectiveness of large group sessions; however, one-half of the students and instructors say that the auditorium sessions are ineffec-

tive. There is significant, strong feeling against large group from 26 students.

All groups value the student's being active, not just listening. Students tend to be more inclined to passivity than the other groups would allow.

Administrators and instructors believe that teachers often represent obstacles to learning. Freshmen have 41 percent no opinion on the teachers as an obstacle, but 51 percent of the sophomores definitely see the teacher as something other than an obstacle. This may be due to the fact that there are few large group sessions in the sophomore curricula.

E. Learning Systems

Measurements in this area involve attitudes toward systematic instruction and educational technology.

The statements are:

e. Learning should occur at school--not from cable TV, audio tape, and programmed learning.

l. It is inhumane to ask students to learn from paper programs and recorded tapes.

q. Course designes such as these are inhumane.

1 = Strongly Agree 5 = Strongly Disagree

Administration

	1	2	3	4	5
e		1		1	3
l		1		2	2
q		1		1	3

Faculty

	1	2	3	4	5
e				1	4
l				2	3
q	1			1	3

	Day Freshman					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
e	2	4	3	12	13		1		1	4
l	1	2	6	10	15	1		1	2	2
q	2	3	3	8	13				1	5

	Day Sophmore					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
e	3	9	3	8	21	3	3	2	2	3
l	4	6	5	16	14		3	2	3	4
q	2	6	2	11	24		1		8	4

There appears to be a very strong feeling for the use of learning systems and technology. Almost 80 percent of the students perceive such a course design as being humane. Students show remarkable familiarity with modern educational technology. The perception is shared by administrators and instructors.

F. Conference Learning

The questionnaire items are:

g. At the present time instructors are accessible for conference.

d. Teachers could not use a conference schedule of more than five hours a week.

m. This course design would allow more effective student-teacher contact than traditional classes.

1 = Strongly Agree 5 = Strongly Disagree

Administration

	1	2	3	4	5
g		3	2		
d				2	3
m	1	3		1	

Faculty

	1	2	3	4	5
g	1	3		1	
d		1	1	1	3
m	3	2			

	Day Freshman					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
g	8	15	6	5		1	2	1	2	
d	1	5	19	9	5		2	2	1	1
m	10	15	3	4	2	5	1			

	Day Sophomore					Night				
	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
g	13	14	8	9		5	5	1	2	
d	3	3	16	12	11	1	1	2		9
m	14	17	4	5	5	3	3	1	5	1

All groups believe that instructors are now accessible for conference, although the administrators' belief is

not very strong.

Administrators and instructors have a strong feeling that instructors should have a weekly conference schedule of more than five hours. Students tend to concur although a large number have no opinion.

All groups say that this course design would allow more effective student-teacher contact than traditional classes.

IV. Recommendations

A. There is sufficient support for installing a redesigned English 131 course. If resources can be located, the course could be implemented by Fall, 1974.

B. There needs to be research into learning style. Who are the eight students who have strong negative feelings about the course? What are their psychological and social profiles?

C. The new course design should be the second way to learn English 131; it should not replace the existing course.

D. Students need orientation to the concept "continuous progress." They do not understand it.

E. There should be organized a group to analyze and evaluate present activities in large group instruction. The group should make recommendations to either improve this mode of instruction, or it should be deleted.

F. A group of instructors should study the "obstacles" that instructors create in class activity. The group should identify remedies which might be accomplished during professional development days.

G. There needs to be developed an accurate depiction of what a typical week would be for an instructor who adopts this new course design.

APPENDIX A

A
STUDY GUIDE
FOR
ORIENTATION TO
ENGLISH 131

Prepared by
Donald G. Bass
College of the Mainland

March 1, 1974

PRESENT STATUS

Presently, you are a student who has enrolled in English 131, a three credit course for the development of communications skills. You have had the college appraisal tests in which you were asked to write for us. On the basis of that writing sample you enrolled in English 131. If your writing revealed many problems, we may have asked you to enroll in Communication 133 or 136, in addition to English 131. In short, the English instructors have evidence that you are in a course where you can learn.

Furthermore, from our past experience, the instructors know that the course may be your first attempt at college. You probably have some anxieties and fears about your ability to do college work. Many of our students are veterans; some are older than the traditional student. Over one third of our student body works at least 40 hours a week. Most of you are the first members of your family to attend college. Reasons students pick most often for attending College of the Mainland are:

1. It is close, convenient.
2. It is relatively inexpensive.

We know that you are very busy people and that you have a variety of amibtions, dreams, problems-------All of us are in the same situation; yet we are all individuals.

All of the above remarks lead us to several conclusions:

1. We really want you to learn.
2. You are a unique individual.
3. We want you to learn comfortably, in a way that fits you.
4. We want you to design some of your own learning experiences.

PRE-COURSE SURVEY

Please respond to the following items

	Yes	No
1. I know the name of my instructor and where that person's office is located.		
2. I know the possible course topics to be learned.		
3. I am familiar with the mechanics of writing the longer paper.		
4. I know how to prepare for a conference and for what purpose it is held.		
5. I know how to enroll in reading and discussion sessions.		
6. I know how to locate community forum events.		
7. I know the purpose and location of the class bulletin board.		
8. I know how to make a grade in this course.		

(For all those [if you marked any] "yes" marks, please skip over that section in the following study guide.)

OBJECTIVES FOR THIS STUDY GUIDE

You should be able to respond yes to all of the above statements.

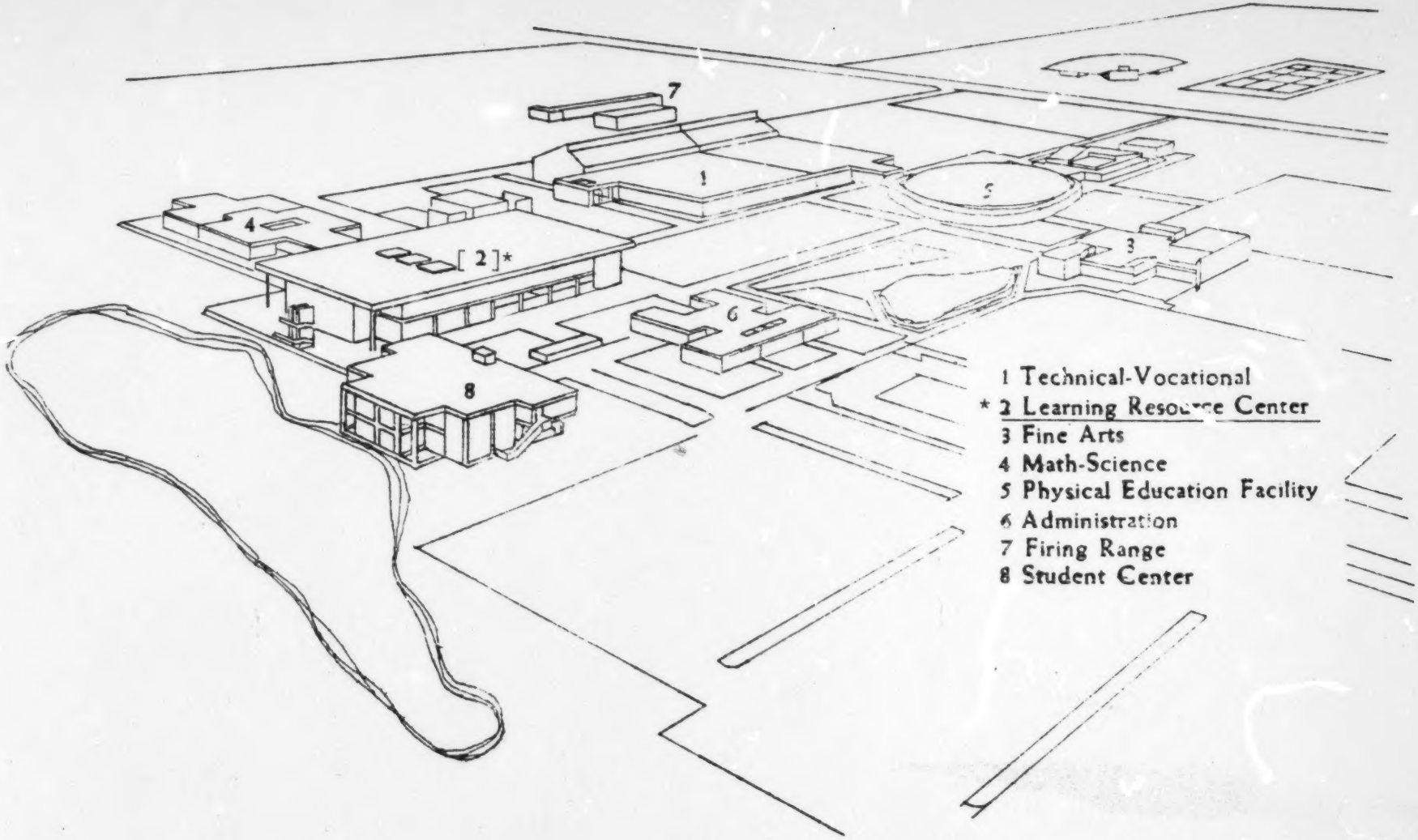
INSTRUCTOR

Your instructor is_____,whose conference office is located in_____in the_____building.

Hours that you might expect to make an appointment with your instructor are:

_____.

The phone number is 938-1211, ext._____



1 Technical-Vocational
* 2 Learning Resource Center
3 Fine Arts
4 Math-Science
5 Physical Education Facility
6 Administration
7 Firing Range
8 Student Center

Materials are available in the bookstore in the College Center. They are:

Cycle 7 Handbook. . . . . by Bell and Cohen

Communication, The Transfer of Meaning, Fabun

COURSE TOPICS

The following topics are available to you in the form of study guides and recorded tape lessons:

Tape Call Number

1. Orientation (That's this one)
2. Communications
3. Observing and Recording
4. Organization and Thesis
5. Introduction and Conclusion
6. Development
7. Precision
8. Library Skills
9. Introversion and Extroversion
10. Reading and Discussion

Each course topic has specific objectives in the study guide for that topic. The cassette tape that goes with that particular study guide can be checked out at the circulation desk in the Learning Resources Center, (LRC) using the call number.

All of the above topics deal with specific communications skills. It may be that on the basis of the first conference with your instructor that you need to work only selective topics. These topics are to be studied individually, on your own time; that is, you may do them at home, in the library, wherever.

There is no classroom associated with the course topics, or rather, there does not have to be one.

On the average each topic will take two hours or so of your time.

THE LONGER PAPER

After you have completed the study guide topics assigned to you, it is time to write the longer paper. The paper should be approximately 500 words long. When you are ready you will have selected a topic, done some reading on the topic, prepared an outline, and come to your instructor ready to write. You may use a dictionary and the outline only. There is no time limit, but you will find it will take one-to-two hours. Ordinarily, you should be ready to write the longer paper in 5 to 7 weeks after you started the course, and after working the required study guide course.

The minimum requirement on the paper is that you score at least seventy points using the following evaluation. For grades of B and A you will need to make higher scores. (See page 6 for the evaluation sheet.)

See "Making a Grade" on page 9 . After you have made the score you want, you have met the objective for writing in English 131.

Topics you may choose from will be on the bulletin board (see page 8 of this guide). They will fall in the general subject areas of education, ecology and futurism.

COMPOSITION EVALUATION SHEET
ENGLISH 131

		YES	NO	VALUE	SCORE
I.	CONTENT AND ORGANIZATION (100%)				
	A. There is a stated thesis idea that controls the entire paper.	____	____	20%	____
	*B. Each body paragraph in the paper has a topic sentence that supports the thesis statement.	____	____	20%	____
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		
	**C. Each body paragraph is adequately developed to prove its topic sentence.	____	____	40%	____
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		
	D. The paper includes a conclusion that smoothly ties the body of the paper back to the thesis.	____	____	10%	____
	E. Ideas in the paper flow smoothly from one paragraph and sentence to the other.	____	____	10%	____
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		
		____	____		

		YES	NO.	NO.	VALUE	SCORE
II.	***MECHANICS					
	A. Spelling errors	____	____	____	1 each	_____
	B. Punctuation errors other than those included in run-on and fragments.	____	____	____	1 each	_____

	YES	NO	NO.	VALUE	SCORE
C. Errors in the use of modifiers.	___	___	___	1 each	_____
D. Errors in the use of pronouns i.e. agreements with antecedent, unnecessary shifts in person.	___	___	___	1 each	_____
E. Errors in verb tense and agreement.	___	___	___	3 each	_____
F. Fragments and run-on sentence.	___	___	___	3 each	_____
G. Inadequate wording (words out of order, omissions, inaccuracy in usage).	___	___	___	1 each	_____

* Points are tabulated per paragraph

** Scale of: A. You convinced the reader
B. You are halfway convincing
C. You are unconvincing

*** Points off for mechanics errors will be subtracted from the total number of points acquired under I. Content and Organization.

CONFERENCES

The purpose of the conference is to give you any individual assistance you need. Every student will have a minimum of two conferences in the course; on the other hand, you may have many more. Conferences may be at the instructor's request, in which case you need to bring all course materials. The conference may be at your request, in which case you need to have planned your questions and remarks.

Some of the kinds of things which might occur in conference are:

1. critique of longer paper
2. clarifying a course topic
3. evaluating progress
4. special tutoring
5. contracting for a grade
6. problem solving, etc.

BULLETIN BOARD

This board is located outside the door to Office Suite B in the LRC (top floor). You should check this board at least once a week; information important to the course will appear here, things like: requests for conferences, longer paper topics and readings, schedules for reading and discussion groups, schedule for monthly community forums, and other information.

COMMUNITY FORUMS

Events of a public and open nature will be scheduled each month on the bulletin board; several will be listed each month. The community forums may be sponsored by a wide variety of groups and agencies, but all will involve interpersonal communications in action. Here are some examples which may help you get the idea: The Great Lecture Series, Great Books, government agency hearings, court proceedings, special college events, city commission meetings, school board meetings, and others.

The objective is that you attend two community forums and file a report on each, using the following outline:

1. name of event
2. describe the group
3. describe the activity (issues)
4. give the length and result
5. criticize the quality of communication seen at the meeting
6. relate any personal meaning the event had for you

READING AND DISCUSSION GROUPS

The purpose of these small groups (10 students) is to give you opportunity to develop reading, listening, and speaking skills. A group lasts for three weeks with three meetings each week. Groups will be starting every two or three weeks, and you join a group merely by signing up on the bulletin board. You should then work the study guide for "reading and discussion" which will explain more fully its small group.

In order to achieve credit for the reading and discussion groups you will need to read the assigned materials, and in writing:

1. Give or paraphrase the writer's thesis (main idea);
2. List support for the thesis

and in discussion you should offer some of the writer's thoughts. There will be nine opportunities to do this, and you will need to succeed on at least 7.

Incidentally, the subjects of these readings will deal with education, ecology, and the future. Many of the community forums will deal with the same topics.

MAKING A GRADE

1. of C :

a. complete assigned course topics,
b. a seventy on the longer paper,
c. two community forum reports,
d. credit for reading and discussion group

2. of B :

   a. complete assigned course topics,
   b. an 80 on the longer paper,
   c. two community forum reports,
   d. credit for reading and discussion group.

3. of A :

   a. complete assigned course topics,
   b. an 85 on the longer paper,
   c. two community forum reports,
   d. credit for reading and discussion groups; discussion which reveals analysis, creation, and evaluation. (Refer to the Study Guide for Reading and Discussion.)

You were promised the opportunity to design some of your own learning, and here is how that can come into play. You will have some choice in the subject of the longer paper, and complete choice in what you say. You may help in choosing what course topics you need. You have a wide choice in the selections of community forums. The readings are established, but it is up to you as to what level you wish to respond to the readings.

Did you meet the objectives?

	Yes	No
1. I know the name of my instructor and where that person's office is located.		
2. I know the possible course topics to be learned.		
3. I am familiar with the mechanics of writing the longer paper.		
4. I know how to prepare for a conference and for what purpose it is held.		
5. I know how to enroll in reading and discussion sessions.		
6. I know how to locate community forum events.		
7. I know the purpose and location of the class bulletin board.		
8. I know how to make a grade in this course.		

Well, how did it fare? Can you answer "yes" to all statements? If you missed an (i.e. "no") repeat that part of the study guide. If there is still a

problem, then you need to bring it up in your initial conference.

This is the end of the study guide. The cassette tape which goes with this unit is call number_____. Please finish the study guide first. When you finish the tape, you are ready for the initial conference.

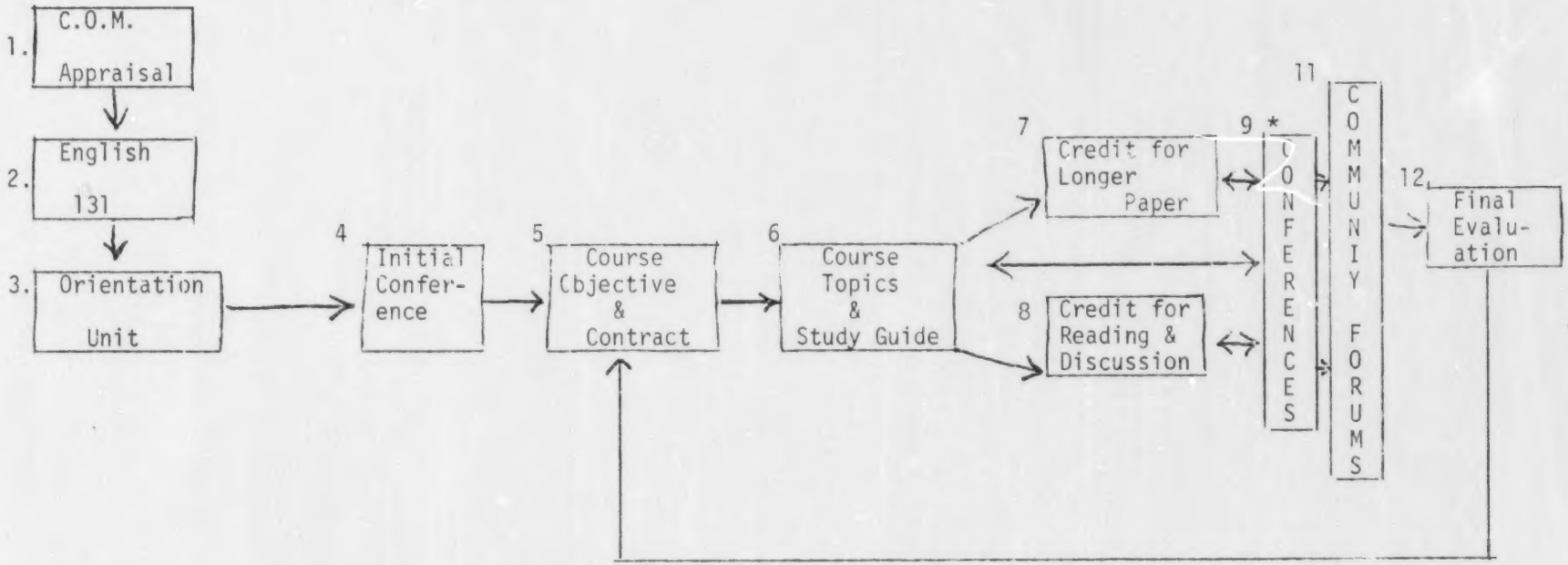
FIRST CONFERENCE PREPARATION

1. Make an appointment.
2. Bring this study guide.
3. Bring your instructor a sample of your writing. Please produce three pages of your writing on one of the following subjects.
    - Habits
    - A Habit I Can Break
    - What It Is Like To Be Someone Else
    - A Powerful Influence On Me
    - Creating a Good Person

When you have worked up to this point you will be at step 4 on the following course design.

ENGLISH 131

INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM



*Conferences may occur at any time in the course.

APPENDIX B

SURVEY OF ATTITUDES

STUDENTS[]
FACULTY []
ADMINISTRATION[]

1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 on the following

1 = I agree strongly
2 = I agree somewhat
3 = I have no opinion
4 = I disagree somewhat
5 = I disagree strongly

Please Circle One

a. This a bad course design.	1	2	3	4	5
b. Large group (auditorium) sessions are very effective.	1	2	3	4	5
c. The semester is an administrative concept and has very little to do with learning.	1	2	3	4	5
d. Teachers could not use a conference schedule of more than five hours a week.	1	2	3	4	5
e. Learning should occur at school--not from cable TV, audio tape, and programmed learning.	1	2	3	4	5
f. Most students can learn independently if they are clearly directed.	1	2	3	4	5
g. At the present time instructors are accessible for conference.	1	2	3	4	5
h. Students should be able to earn credit when they have learned what the course proposes to teach. (8 weeks, 10, 18, 22 weeks, etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
i. Teachers often represent obstacles to learning because they are the center of attention.	1	2	3	4	5
j. Courses should last for 18 weeks.	1	2	3	4	5
k. Students learn better if they are actively participating, rather than hearing about it.	1	2	3	4	5
l It is inhumane to ask students to learn from paper programs and recorded tapes.	1	2	3	4	5
m. This course design would allow more effective student-teacher contact than traditional classes.	1	2	3	4	5
n. Most students must have the direction of teacher in order to learn and earn course credit.	1	2	3	4	5
o. Students should be allowed to register and begin learning almost everyday of the year.	1	2	3	4	5
p. Most high school students could not learn to go to school in this way.	1	2	3	4	5
q. Course designs such as these are inhumane.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX C

ABSTRACT

The practicum is the creation of a course orientation module for a new introductory English design.

The module explains the course topics, the requirements, and the learning settings. Requirements call for specific skill levels in reading, writing, and discussion. Students will be learning in conference, in the community, in small groups, and in independent situations. The main feature of the design is that students have almost complete flexibility as to when they attend school.

In addition to creating the module, the practicum studies administration, faculty, and student attitudes toward several course features. The features are independent study, continuous progress, active learning, educational technology, and learning in conference. Results of these attitude studies are translated into recommendations.

Some of the important findings are that most of our students do not believe large group instruction is effective. Our students are basically at ease with modern educational technology; they want to learn with directed independent study and they find conference learning attractive. On the other hand, our students are somewhat unknowledgeable about the concept of continuous progress.

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